The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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AGITATE! EDUCATE! ORGANIZE!

VOL. 14, NO. 46. WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 1925. WHOLE NO. 721.

LEMIEUX ACT HELD ILLEGAL BY BRITAIN'S HIGHEST COURT

Ottawa, Ontario, Jan. 31.—The judicial committee of the British privy council has held that the Canadian industrial disputes act, popularly known as the Lemieux act, is a violation of the British North American act (Canada's constitution).

The judgment, delivered by Lord Haldane, held, in effect, that under the B. N. A. act, Canadian provinces have exclusive jurisdiction in matters affecting property and civil rights.

"It does not appear," said Lord Haldane, "that there is anything in the Dominion act which could not have been enacted by the Ontario legislature, excepting one provision. The field for operation was the whole of Canada."

"Whatever else may be the effect of the enactment of the industrial disputes act," continued Lord Haldane, "it is clear that it is one which could have been passed so far as any province was concerned by a provincial legislature under section 92 of the B. N. A. act, for its provisions were concerned directly with the civil rights of both employers and employes in the province."

This case was carried to the privy council in London, by the hydro-electric power commission of Ontario, which operates the provincial-owned hydro-electric system. The commission had refused to recognize the law in a dispute with its employes, on the ground that the Dominion government can not infringe upon provincial rights. The question was carried through the various courts of Canada and then on to the highest judicial tribunal in the British empire, which now sustains the hydro-electric commission.

The industrial disputes act was passed in 1907, when the Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux was postmaster general and minister of labor. W. L. Mackenzie King, then deputy minister of labor, and now premier of Canada, was prominently identified with the passage of the act, which had compulsory features for disputes in public utilities, and also relied on public opinion.

In the case of a dispute in a public utility either party to the dispute, or both, could call on the Dominion minister of labor to create a board of conciliation and investigation. Membership of the board consisted of a representative of the employers, a representative of the workers and a chairman selected by both representatives. Where either side failed to appoint a representative, or where both sides failed to select a chairman, the minister of labor appointed.

Under the law it was illegal to force a strike or lockout until the board made its report. After the report was made, the strike or lockout prohibition was ineffective.

The law did not apply to other industries except where both parties agreed to come under its provisions.

RUBBER WORKERS UNITE; FIRST TIME IN AMERICA

Carrollton, Ohio, Jan. 31.—Employes of the Tuscan tire and rubber company have organized a union and signed a union-label agreement with the company.

A. F. of L. Organizer Conboy calls attention to the fact that this is the first time in American industrial history that a recognized trade union has been formed in this industry.

The company manufactures the Tuscan and Buckskin tires; also gloves, quarter bottles and other drug-gists' sundries. These products will carry the union label.

The first hint that the Tuscan company was negotiating with the A. F. of L. representative aroused the rubber barons of this district. As Akron, the center of the district, is but 30 miles distant, anti-union employers fear that trade unionism will spread to their spy-ridden areas. The Tuscan management was informed by various methods that their policy is objectionable.

The Corporation service bureau of Cleveland, notorious private detective agency, wrote to the Tuscan company "that we are advised by one of our operatives that a party whose name is supposedly Conboy is endeavoring to organize the Akron district and that he was successful in practically completing a labor organization among a certain element of your employes." The agency offered to furnish skilled rubber workers to avert the necessary information.

In turning this letter over to the unionists, the general manager of the Tuscan company wrote:

"This letter speaks for itself and is a revelation of men, but probably a very old story to you. Isn't it sometimes a little appalling when you consider the depths to which some of the human family sink in their mad scramble for dollars!"

WM. GREEN'S FATHER PASSES ON, AGED 90

Coshocton, Ohio, Jan. 31.—Hugh Green, father of William Green, president of the A. F. of L., died in this city at the home of his son. He was 90 years old and was a miner until incapacitated by age. President Green was with his father in his last hours.

WAGE RATES ARE LOWER

Albany, N. Y., Jan. 31.—According to the New York state department of labor, employes in heating apparatus shops average $2.60 less than a year ago. Electrical and railroad equipment shops also report a lower average at present. Chemical and oil plants, textile mills and clothing shops average more, partly because of lower employment.

The department expresses the belief that "on the whole, however, the movement toward decreased rates, which was gaining headway in December, apparently has worked itself out."

HAT AND CAP MAKERS GAIN

Baltimore, Jan. 31.—Hat and cap makers have won their fight for wage increases and improved working conditions.

WORKERS WILL HONOR LATE SAMUEL GOMPERS

Washington, Jan. 31.—In accord with a resolution passed by the A. F. of L. executive council, President Green has appointed a committee to have charge of a national labor memorial to the late Samuel Gompers. That committee consists of A. F. of L. Secretary Morrison and Vice Presidents Duffy, Tobin, Woll and Wilson.

It is the purpose to concentrate on a national memorial, rather than on a multiplicity of smaller and purely local memorials.

There has been no intimation thus far as to what form the memorial might take.

In a statement to the trade union movement, President Green said: "A number of sporadic unauthorized and self-styled memorial committees already are at work collecting money under the pretense that funds so raised are to be used for a memorial."

"The committee which I have appointed is the only authorized committee, and no others should be recognized in any way."

BUILDING INDUSTRY DOES NOT WANT BOYS

Washington, Jan. 31.—The United States bureau of labor statistics has been studying apprentice systems in the building trades unions of the nation's capital and reports: "In not a single case is where the number of apprentices allowed by 'union rules could be calculated, was the allowed number being trained."

The report intimates that employers are badly handicapped because of this highly specialized industry.

"The seasonal nature of the work appeared to be a factor in making it difficult to hold apprentices and because of this fact, and the difficulty of giving the necessary technical training which can not be given on the job, the tendency among employers appears to be to employ such workers as helpers without giving them a chance to acquire thorough training," the bureau reports.

The study includes the various apprentice rules of these unions, but the outstanding feature of the report is:

Specialization calls for helpers, rather than apprentices, and boys will not accept this work because there is no promise of a future, and the apprentice quota of the unions remain unfilled.

MINERS IN DISTRESS; PLEA FOR AID ISSUED

Washington, Jan. 31.—In a statement issued from A. F. of L. headquarters, all trade union affiliates are reminded of a resolution passed by the El Paso convention calling on organized labor and sympathizers to aid West Virginia and Kentucky miners.

These workers are endeavoring to secure a renewal of the agreements which expired in March last year. In some sections of West Virginia the struggle to maintain trade unionism dates back nearly four years.

Wholesale evictions necessitated the establishment of barrack and tent colonies on land leased by the United Mine Workers, and strikers and their wives and children are facing another winter with nothing to shield them from the elements but tent and board shacks.

The strikers are in sore need of clothing, shoes and school books for their children. The United Mine Workers are doing everything in their power to reduce suffering to a minimum, but the financial task is increasing because of additional miners who are rejecting the coal baron's anti-union policy, making an army of thugs. In addition to maintaining these colonies, the union is paying for defending the relentless heavy attorneys' fees.

Contributions of money and clothing can be forwarded to Will C. Thompson, secretary-treasurer district No. 17, box 1382, Charleston, W. Va., or to H. H. Vincent, secretary-treasurer district No. 23, Central City, Ky.

STREET CAR MEN WIN

Detroit, Mich., Jan. 31.—Organized street car men have won a complete victory over the anti-union city commission that operates the municipal owned street car lines.

The commission attempted to disrupt the union by organizing a company "union." Matters reached a crisis on several occasions, but the disciplined unionists refused to take hasty action, though their secretary and business representative were discharged.

The commission ignored the city charter in its dealing with the union. The street car men responded in last mayoralty election and were a factor in the success of Mayor Smith. That official pledged that justice would be done, and he kept his word.

The discharged unionists have been reinstated.

HONOR MEXICAN UNIONIST

El Paso, Texas, Jan. 31.—At a public meeting, under the auspices of the central labor union, organized labor greeted Luis N. Morones, former president of the Mexican federation of labor, and now a member of President Calles' cabinet.

LEATHER WORKERS IN LINE

Chicago, Jan. 31.—The organization campaign of the United Leather Workers' International union is already bringing results. The Machinery Belt Workers' union has rejoined the international, after a six-year absence.

CHILD LABOR DEFINED: NO PLAY OR GROWTH

Toledo, Ohio, Jan. 31.—"Child labor does not mean selling newspapers after school nor working a few hours on holidays. It means toiling long hours at machines in factories, and slaving in fields, excessive tasks at low wages. It means no time for school, play or healthy growth," says a correspondent in the Toledo Union Leader.

"The 1920 census said that 1,060,956 children were working, but this counts only those from 10 to 15 years old. Thousands of children less than 10 years old are at work. Children less than 6 years old working all day, are discovered from time to time by investigators of the national child labor committee.

"At the same time, while more than a million children are working, far more than a million men and women are unemployed. Setting the children free will be good for the children, but it will also give jobs to men and women who are now idle.

"Even the people who live in states which have good laws against child labor, and which enforce the laws they have, use goods produced in all the states. So all the people in all the states are using articles produced in part by child labor."

PENNSY DEFIES LAW: DENIES UNION RIGHTS

Philadelphia, Jan. 31.—The Pennsylvania railroad management has mailed notices to its telegraphers that an election for representatives of that company "union" will be held in February.

The telegraphers recently held a secret ballot to elect representatives in wage negotiations. This election was under the direction of the United States railroad labor board. The Order of Railroad Telegraphers received 8,386 votes and the Pennsylvania's company "union" received 518 votes.

Before the election, local committees of these workers were instructed to report to their respective superintendents, who called them into a private office one at a time and endeavored to have them repudiate the Order of Railroad Telegraphers and pledge allegiance to the company "union." The committeemen were told that if they did not agree on the dotted line their positions would be declared vacant. The workers refused to be intimidated.

Despite the failure of these terroristic tactics, and the telegraphers' overwhelming endorsement of a fake "union," these workers are now called upon to continue the thing they have rejected.

Under the transportation act railroad employes may decide who shall represent them.

STATE COLLECTS WAGES

Sacramento, Calif., Jan. 31.—In the biennial report of the state bureau of labor statistics, State Labor Commissioner Matthew Schmitt announces the collection of $854,163.85 in unpaid wages to workers. This is an increase from $450,164 in the two preceding years.

CHILD LABOR EXPLOITERS MAKE RIDICULOUS CLAIMS

By REV. JOHN A. RYAN, D. D.

On the occasion of its refusal to ratify the federal child labor amendment, the state of Arkansas passed a resolution declaring that the amendment "would destroy parental authority and responsibility throughout America, would give irrevocable support to a rebellion of childhood which menaces our civilization, would give congress not only parental authority but state authority over education. * * * It would place congress in control in every home in the land between parent and child."

According to this amazing statement, the proposed amendment would give congress powers over children which are not now possessed by any state. This is diametrically opposed to the truth and the facts. Every state in the union at present enjoys all the authority that congress would derive from the proposed amendment.

Whatever control congress would exercise under the amendment can be exercised now by Oregon, or Oregon, or Michigan, or any other state. No competent lawyer would impugn this statement.

Hence it is a gross perversion of fact to assert that "the proposed amendment would enable congress to take the control of children out of the home." The power vested in congress by the amendment would be subtracted, not from that of the parents, but from that of the states. Family control would remain as the main essentially and exactly what they are at present.

To be sure, laws passed by congress under the amendment would interfere to some extent with parental control, but not as much as child labor statutes which have been enacted by the various states. So much for the charge that the amendment would give congress powers over children which are not now possessed by any state. This is diametrically opposed to the truth and the facts. Every state in the union at present enjoys all the authority that congress would derive from the proposed amendment.

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NEW FORM OF TRUST MENACES RETAILER

New York, Jan. 31.—The "vertical" trust, that will link up the manufacturer and retailer, as declared by Irving S. Paul, a business analyst, before the National boot and shoe manufacturers' association, is the latest menace to the small business man, or anti-union policy, maintained by an army of thugs. In addition to maintaining these colonies, the union is paying for defending the relentless heavy attorneys' fees.

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CONFERENCES HELD IN MINE DISPUTE

Cleveland, Jan. 31.—As the result of a conference with Warren F. Stone, president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, a committee representing the A. F. of L. executive council has arranged a meeting, early in February, in Washington between Mr. Stone and John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, to discuss differences with the miners' union.

The last convention of the A. F. of L. it was voted to refer these differences to the executive council. President Green appointed A. F. of L. Secretary Frank Morrison and Vice Presidents Ryan and Noonan as mediators, who will meet with Messrs. Lewis and Stone. The latter, together with other members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, are interested in the West Virginia mines.

JOHN LEWIS RE-ELECTED

Indianapolis, Jan. 31.—A report on the referendum of the United Mine Workers shows that John L. Lewis has been re-elected president by a vote of 136,206. His opponent, George Voysey of Illinois, received 62,842. Philip Murray received 178,836 votes for vice president and Arthur Maples of Illinois 66,038 for that office.

The A. F. of L. delegates are: President Lewis, Wm. Green, former secretary-treasurer; Frank Morrison and Vice Presidents Ryan and Noonan as mediators, who will meet with Messrs. Lewis and Stone. The latter, together with other members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, are interested in the West Virginia mines.

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CHILD EXPLOITERS WON'T DISCUSS ISSUE

Nashville, Tenn., Jan. 31.—The editor of an obscure weekly paper was the one lone opponent of the federal child labor amendment at a joint hearing of the judiciary committee of the state senate and house of representatives.

Tennessee is the home state of John E. Edgerton, textile manufacturer and president of the National Association of Manufacturers' association. This organization is leading the fight against the amending the A. F. of L. convention at El Paso would be furnished them for $25.

Holding up a copy of the proceedings of the convention, Edgerton told his audience these can be secured for 50 cents a copy from A. F. of L. headquarters in Washington.

"If you bit," continued President Clarke, "you are out $24.50."

EMBROIDERY WORKERS GAIN

New York, Jan. 31.—Swiss embroidery workers, affiliated to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union, have signed wage scales to run to and including date back to last December.

After ratifying the agreement, the union raised dues without a dissenting vote.

Rockefeller's Company "Union" Exposed by Impartial Probers

New York, Jan. 31.—The glamour with which publicity agents have surrounded the company "union" of the Colorado fuel and iron company has been dimmed by a report issued by the Russell Sage foundation, which has studied this movement.

The integrity of the report is to be impartial is manifest, but their findings reveal that at every turn they were confronted by the fact that the employes are not free to express themselves, and that the company is a bitter opponent of trade unionism.

The report states that "as a result of this plan, working and living conditions are more wholesome and happy for the miners and their families, but," the report significantly adds:

"The miners are not satisfied that their representatives have the power to protect them in decisions regarding wages and other conditions of work."

The "union" is called the "industrial representation plan." It is the forerunner of the many forms of company "unions" now in existence in this country. It was established in October, 1915, by W. L. Mackenzie King, present premier of Canada, at the request of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., following a bitter strike that culminated in the burning of the miners' tent colony at Ludlow, Colorado, on April 20, 1914, when a score of men, women and children were killed.

The report says that the employes' representatives are men who work in the mines and who do not feel free to act in opposition to the company's interest in defense of fellow-workers; that employes are not making full use of the plan even for the presentation of grievances; that in actual practice the employes' representatives have no share in decisions concerning reported grievances; that the issue of trade unions versus employes' representation is kept constantly alive by the company's refusal to permit union meetings in any building in the camps owned by the company, by other frequent instances of antagonism to unions and by the company's policy of accepting the wage scale of its competitors which has actually been set by unionized companies through negotiation with the United Mine Workers, while refusing to deal in any way with the miners' union.

Following this indictment of the company's anti-union policy, the investigators express the belief that there is room in an industry for the company "union" and for trade unionism, and that the part each one shall play must be determined through conference.

The study covered a period of several months, and was under the direction of Mary Van Kleeck, director, department of industrial studies, Russell Sage foundation. Before the report was published it was submitted to President Lewis of the United Mine Workers and other officers of that organization, "who approved it as a whole."

"It was also submitted to the officers of the company and to Mr. Rockefeller," the report states, "and we regret that after giving full consideration to their objections and many differences of opinion as to interpretation and conclusions still remain."

FAULTY EXPLOSIVES USED BY COAL OWNERS

Washington, Jan. 31.—During the period 1908-1923 there were 65 mine explosions that killed 758 persons in the United States and in every instance these disasters were caused by the use of improper explosives, according to Dorsey A. Lyon, acting director of the federal bureau of mines.

Dr. Lyon said that the bureau "has no record of an explosion disaster having resulted anywhere, at any time, in the United States from the use of permissible explosives."

These "unquestioned evidence," he said, "that undercut coal can be blasted by permissibles as cheaply as by non-permissibles, and, under other conditions, where the direct cost of using permissibles may be greater, there are direct savings on this, when the cost of compensation for killed or injured workmen, of interruption of work and of damage to property from explosions or fires caused by non-permissible explosives are taken into consideration."

Dr. Lyon emphasized that the bureau has no power to enforce the use of permissible explosives, as this is a state function. He let it be understood, however, if coal owners abandoned the use of non-permissible explosives, as is the case in England, the lives of hundreds of miners would be saved.

OPPOSE "PEN" PRINTERY

Charlotte, N. C., Jan. 31.—The central labor union has pledged its support to typographical unions in opposing the plan of George Ross Pou, superintendent of the state prison, that a printing plant be established in the "pen."

In joining the opposition, the Charlotte federation has fine air behind union printing plants in the state capital:

"If reports reaching the Herald are true, there are several prisoners in the high who are working under penitentiary conditions and they would probably not seriously object to the transfer."

HEBREW CHURCH MEN ADOPT SOCIAL PLAN

St. Louis, Mo., Jan. 31.—The Union of Hebrew Congregations, at the close of its convention in this city, approved a social program declaration which includes freedom of speech, recognition of the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively, abolition of child labor, a work day that will not exceed eight hours, and a "more equitable distribution of the profits of industry."

These church men also favored:

Mediation, conciliation and arbitration in the settlement of industrial disputes.

A compulsory one-day-of-rest-in-seven.

Regulation of industrial conditions to give all workers a safe and sanitary environment, paying particular reference to the special needs of women.

Adequate compensation for industrial accidents and occupational diseases.

Legislative provision for universal workmen's health insurance and careful study of social insurance methods for meeting the contingencies of unemployment and old age.

Proper housing for working people, secured through government regulation when necessary.

An adequate permanent national system of free employment bureaus to make possible the proper distribution of the labor forces of America.

A committee was also appointed to work for the program.

WANT NEW SCHOOLS

Wilmington, Del., Jan. 31.—The convention of the Delaware state federation of labor declared that the rebuilding of Delaware's schools is a necessity. A committee was appointed to study school building plan.

PLUMBERS ORGANIZE

Parkersburg, W. Va., Jan. 31.—Plumbers in the city have organized and have affiliated with the regular trade union movement.

Free Speech Upheld In Illinois; Constitution Applies To Labor

Streator, Ill., Jan. 31.—The state supreme court has ruled that J. N. St. Clair, president of A. F. of L. federal union No. 15,107, is not guilty of contempt of court, and will not have to pay a fine of $500 or go to jail.

The court proceedings grew out of the strike against the Vulcan detinning company of this city. The workers were enjoined. Later the company announced that the strike was off, but the union caused to be published a statement in the daily press that the strike was not over. Three former members of the union, employed at the Vulcan, were referred to as "traitors." Lower courts held that this was a violation of the injunction, and upheld a $500 fine against St. Clair.

In reversing this decision, the supreme court did not pass upon the injunction as such, but did hold that the constitution of the state "is the law of the land, free and equal, and is binding alike upon the humblest citizen and the most powerful corporation."

"Though an abuse of the liberty guaranteed may result in loss for which there can not be adequate compensation, yet the constitution people believe that it is better that such be the result in isolated cases than that the liberty of speech be subject to the supervision of a censor."

The court made it clear that the unionists could discuss former members of the union as freely as they want to "as long as the discussion did not take place at a point and in a manner that would intimidate those employed by or seeking employment with the appellee, thereby injuring or threatening its business or property."

Employers and Workers Join In Attack On Prison Labor

New York, Jan. 31.—The United Garment Workers of America and the Union Made Garment Manufacturers' association will inaugurate a nation-wide campaign against the sale of prison-made men's garments.

This is in accord with repeated declarations by the A. F. of L. against a social and industrial evil. The joint committee of the manufacturers and unionists is headed by Oscar Berman, manufacturer, and Max Thomas and Rickert and B. A. Large, president and secretary-treasurer of the United Garment Workers; B. Stern, secretary of the Garment manufacturers' association, and Stanley A. Sweet and Abner E. Lotery, counsel.

"This campaign will be nation-wide, and will awaken the public to the results of a competition with products made by free labor that is so detrimental to the worker," said President Rickert. "Mrs. Kate Richards O'Hare, who has been active in this work for some time, will represent us in an executive and organizing capacity in this undertaking."

"Prison labor for private profit is a live question in the labor movement and it can not be shunted over to the politicians to handle," said Mrs. O'Hare. "The sooner organized labor faces the facts in the situation, the sooner we may solve the problem. Certainly nothing can be gained by hiding our heads in the sand.

"Despite the claims of modern progress, the utilization of convict labor has advanced from the old, crude and wasteful system of the middle of the century ago to the most modern and efficient mass production. The old, unskilled, forced labor has also been of other days has been replaced with the efficiency expert and the most up-to-date factory methods. The workers of years ago convict labor contracting was a chaotic, hit-and-miss, dog-eat-dog scramble between individual political contractors, while prison factories were badly equipped, wretchedly managed, and their produces' only goods of the lowest quality and salable to the least discriminating trade.

"But the condition could not continue in our highly specialized and scientifically organized industrial world. The same social forces that produced the oil trust, the lumber trust, the railroad trust and the banking trust have also created the prison labor trust and made it one of the mighty trusts. The Atlanta Penitentiary called the 'invisible government.'

"The prison labor trust wields its influence in the same way that corporations controls politicians, shapes the policies of political parties, oils the wheels of politics, corrupts courts and molds the editorial policies of many great newspapers. It retains eminent lawyers on its staff. It buys legislation through reputable brokers, donates liberally to charitable, social and religious causes and maintains publicity and well-paid lobbies. In fact, it does all the things other great trusts do, and it nearly instances does them much better.

"The exploitation of convict labor has been concentrated in a few industries, and naturally the workers in those trades suffer most, though the evil effects result out into every industry, including agriculture. The greatest concentration in convict labor is in the garment industry, work garments, principally, and it is the garment workers who are suffering most from the invasion of prison-made goods in the markets.

"The largest manufacturing company and its subsidiaries, makers of 'Big Yank' shirts, according to its advertising, employs more than 3,000 convict work shirts in 1923, most of them produced in prison factories and by convict labor. Other smaller concerns use prison labor trust possibly produced more than this number of shirts and, in addition, millions of garments, overalls, coveralls, workmen's trousers, children's overalls and play suits and women's house dresses and aprons. It

"The competition of prison-made goods is sapping the life of the garment industry and free factories are closing down in all of the centers of production. Thousands of free garment workers are walking the streets, but there is no unemployment in the prison factories. Thousands of convicts are busy making well known and widely advertised brands of prison-made goods."

EASY MONEY FOR "FINKS"

Toledo, Ohio, Jan. 31.—"Private detective agencies find easy money among those business men who pay for trade union information," said Edward J. Smith, president of the American Flint Glass Workers, in an address to the local Rotary club. The Flint Glass Workers' union is among men who were assured by one detective agency that information regarding the A. F. of L. convention at El

Holding up a copy of the proceedings, President Smith declared he could his audience these can be secured for 50 cents a copy from A. F. of L. headquarters in Washington.

"If you bit," continued President Clarke, "you are out $24.50."

EMBROIDERY WORKERS GAIN

New York, Jan. 31.—Swiss embroidery workers, affiliated to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union, have signed wage scales to run to and including date back to last December.

After ratifying the agreement, the union raised dues without a dissenting vote.